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STATE NEA/MAG, DRL/PHD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM MO

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS LAW CLINICS IN MOROCCO -- THE CASE  
FOR CONTINUED FUNDING

REF: 05 RABAT 01766

¶1. (U) This cable is sensitive but unclassified. Please  
treat accordingly.

¶2. (U) This is an action request. See paragraph 3. With  
funding ending March 31, Post seeks an opportunity to express  
support for the continuation of the American Bar Association  
"Human Rights Clinical Legal Education" program in advance of  
any Department deliberations on continued funding.

¶3. (SBU) Summary: The American Bar Association (ABA), a US  
nongovernmental organization (NGO), has worked for the past  
year with Hassan II University in Mohammedia to institute a  
"Human Rights Clinical Legal Education" program. A  
"memorandum of understanding" (MOU) was signed between ABA  
and the university in June 2005. University president Rahma  
Bourquia, Morocco's first and only female university  
president, actively supports the project and signed the MOU  
for the university. Classes began in the fall (October)  
semester. The DRL/PHD-funded program has met with active and  
effective support at the highest levels of the university,  
including the president, deans, and the law faculty. Law  
students eagerly participate in the training sessions, and  
lawyers and human rights activists from throughout Morocco  
have volunteered their time to teach in the program. The  
university has developed plans to sustain the project after  
approximately eighteen months, and it is interested in  
increasing the number of students who participate in the  
clinics. This program is a funding success story which is  
acting as an effective change-agent within Morocco, and we  
strongly encourage DRL's continued support for the project,  
which we believe is necessary to ensure the program's  
sustainability. End Summary.

¶4. (U) During the summer and prior to the beginning of the  
fall semester, ABA distributed applications to students. Of  
the 170 applications to participate, ABA chose fifty students  
to be interviewed; thirty-one were chosen for the course.  
Because of course scheduling, twenty-two students enrolled.  
Some of these students reside in low-income areas of  
Casablanca. (Note: During this initial year as facilities  
in the law school were allocated and organized and the  
program was devised, more than this number of students could  
not be accommodated. End Note.)

¶5. (SBU) ABA structured the clinic curriculum to encompass  
four subject areas: international human rights law sources  
and philosophy; human rights protection mechanisms; specific  
human rights, e.g., labor law, refugee issues, women's  
rights, children's rights; and practical legal skills. To  
date, twenty-three classes have been held in these areas,

and fourteen different lecturers, who are either lawyers or human rights specialists, have taught the students using an interactive pedagogical method. Among the lecturers have been Abderahim Sabir (regional director for Human Rights Education Associates and a spokesperson for the Arab Commission for Human Rights), Khadija Farhi (law professor, Hassan II University), Abdelaziz Nouaydi (law professor, Mohammed V University, Sale; founder of Adala, a Moroccan NGO advocating judicial independence), and Rabea Naciri (founder of the Democratic Association of Women in Morocco; along with Rahma Bourquia, implementing a major MEPI project on the dissemination of "best practices" based on the Moroccan Family Code changes).

¶16. (SBU) This second semester the clinics are concentrating on labor-related human rights issues. To develop this aspect of the training, ABA will be signing a MOU with the Center for People's Rights in Fez. This center is a national human rights organization which provides counseling services to women workers in fifty-four listening centers throughout Morocco. What is anticipated is that women workers in the Mohammedia area will be referred to the clinic to receive legal advice from students who will be working with lawyers.

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Comments  
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¶17. (SBU) In a December 2005 meeting, Hassan II University presented an initial action plan to ensure the sustainability of the law clinics to DRLoff and Poloff. ABA volunteered at that time to assist in working on the details of the action plan. The involved parties also think that it will take one year to eighteen months to enable the university to make the program sustainable. Additional funding from the USG for

this period would specifically allow the enhancement of the Hassan II University law clinic and the possibility of establishing another clinic (reftel). As the only funding source for this project, the Department can take pride in the accomplishments to date. The program has met with great success -- the university is supportive, the lecturers have participated eagerly, and the students remain excited.

¶18. (SBU) Comment cont'd: In addition to the positive nature of the students' and Hassan II University administration's and faculty's broadly-based commitment to and involvement in the "Human Rights Clinical Legal Education" program, this program affords an opportunity to further USG policy goals through the promotion of democratic practices in a hands-on format. It is one of the only on-going programs the USG has with a major Moroccan university, although we work closely with several universities for speaker programs and thematic programs; moreover, the clinic program is providing concrete skills to Moroccan students in the area of rule of law. In addition, while the clinic affords the opportunity for students to understand the international context of human rights, it allows the USG to have broader exposure to the concerns and needs of Moroccan students. This exposure enables the mission to understand the challenges in the area of rule of law and judicial reform more fully and to ensure that limited USG resources are effectively targeting goals outlined in the Mission's reform strategy. End Comment.  
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